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Experiencing God in a foreign land

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Chapter 5

The Circle of Place Spirituality (CoPS): Towards an attachment and exploration motivational systems approach in the psychology of religion

Abstract

The author proposes a variation to the 'Circle of Security' model offered by Marvin et al. (2002): one in which the behaviour of a religious believer is depicted in a circular pattern of movement that begins and ends with the object(s) of attachment. This variation is conceptualised in this paper as the *Circle of Place Spirituality* (CoPS). CoPS takes a relational psychoanalytic approach to examine the interplay of multiple shifting motivations within the individual in terms of exploration of place and attachment to God. This proposed model recognises stimulation to anthropomorphised objects of attachment within the individual context based on two motivational drives: attachment needs and exploration curiosity. It is argued that these two drives enhance the perception of the object of attachment as either a safe haven for attachment-affiliation or a secure base for exploration curiosity. In the last section of the paper, the attachment needs and exploration curiosity are presented as the drives responsible for the engagement with objects of attachment and further clarified as the systems through which the interplay of exploration of place and attachment to God can be adequately understood in CoPS.

Introduction

Marvin et al. (2002) introduced what they refer to as the *Circle of Security*, which was the label they gave to the circular movement pattern of a child's behaviour with a primary caregiver. The central feature of this attachment-based concept of parenting is the notion that parents, or primary caregivers, provide a secure base from which a child explores the world around them, and a safe haven to which they turn in times of danger (Main, Kaplan, & Cassidy, 1985). This attachment advantage is, in essence, attributed to the quality of care and support that a caregiver provides when perceived as being available, sensitive, and accessible to the child (Bowlby,

1988). Attachment theory gives some additional insight into how a similar circular pattern of attachment-caregiving can be applied to understanding what will now be referred to as the *circle of place spirituality* (CoPS). This is a circular movement pattern that demonstrates the interplay of motivation between exploration of place and attachment to God (i.e., the inner representation of a divine entity).

The notion of attachment-caregiving in psychology of religion is grounded on the psychodynamic view that relationship patterns begin to form in the early years of life (Granqvist, 2006) and that individuals are pre-programmed to seek care and support from human and non-human objects of attachment to which they turn for security, hope, and emotional meaning. Adult attachment scholars treat the relationship with objects of attachment as a positive enduring bond established when there is no available human attachment figure to satisfy attachment needs (e.g., Cicirelli, 2004; Lager et al. 2012; Counted 2016a). This has been well-documented as aspects of adult attachment development (e.g., Cicirelli, 2004; Counted, 2017) which can have diverse patterns and are often unstable and different from the prototype of attachment to a primary caregiver or a parent. Notwithstanding, attachment is attributed to the inner representation of some visible or invisible objects of attachment (e.g., divine entities, geographic places) due to their advantage and relational values as safe havens and secure bases for exploring an ‘insecure’ world.

It is proposed in this paper that the interplay of attachment to place and to God assumes a special importance to the future of the study of psychology of religion and spirituality. It is further proposed that these forms of attachment can also be the genesis of a ‘cycle’ of place spirituality in which place meanings and experiences play pivotal roles in strengthening devotion to the divine. When God becomes an attachment surrogate that people turn to when subjected to negative place experiences, or a place becomes a target for proximity among individuals experiencing spiritual struggles, then the dynamics of such a relationship becomes a necessary discourse that unpacks the role of the interplay between place and religion in the meaning-making process, as will be made clearer in subsequent pages.

Psychoanalysis, Attachment, and Objects of Attachment

Arguably, the field of relational psychoanalysis was recognised as a school of thought in the early 19th century with the work of Sigmund Freud, who attempted to construct an understanding of the origins of religion by emphasizing the role of real and imagined relationships with the notion of God (in a generic sense that is not restricted to any specific religion). Freud's interest in religion stemmed from the work of the 18th century German philosopher and anthropologist, Ludwig Feuerbach, who had made a similar case about the developmental deficits of religion, dismissing it as a projection of the human mind. Freud (1913) further developed this idea of religion, lending extra psychological support to Feuerbach's propositions, using a drive model analysis which enabled him to project religion as the reflection of the child's physical relationship with a father. In his book, *Totem and Taboo*, Freud advanced this idea of imagination or 'wish-fulfilment' in religion, arguing that the origin of religion is associated with pleasure-seeking instinctual drives. For many scholars, Freud's psychoanalytic account on religion is worthy of consideration but has been critiqued by others (e.g., Hick, 1990; Plantinga, 2000; Rowe, 2001) because it is based on developmental deficits that lead to a distorted view of religion. A recent review (e.g., Granqvist & Kirkpatrick, 2016) shows that adults can experience God as an attachment surrogate and such experience exerts meaningful power in the life of believers, thereby disproving Freud's discrediting of religious faith. Freudian psychoanalysis does not give due consideration to the individual meanings attributed to religion based on the spiritual connection and transcendence that is achieved through the relationship with God.

Post-Freudian psychoanalysis took a different paradigm shift some decades later with a more open-minded attitude towards believer-God relationships in religion. This began with the work of Fairbairn (1952) who drew from Freud's psychoanalysis to introduce an object relations theory that moved away from "Freud's instinctual model of human motivation and replaces it with an essentially relational vision of human beings" (Jones, 1996, p.24). Having rejected the narrow Freudian psychoanalytic model of drive-conflict, Fairbairn's object relations theory was later used by another psychoanalytic theorist, Anna-Maria Rizzuto, who took an object relations approach to study the origins of religion in her book, *The Birth of the Living God*. Rizzuto's (1979) magisterial work has been inspirational for many

scholars who began examining the idea of 'God' in religion in terms of positive and negative relational representations and psychoanalysis.

The shift from Freudian psychoanalysis to a more relational model of human nature gave rise to John Bowlby's attachment theory, which was developed based on Freudian relational psychoanalysis, while also drawing from Fairbairn's (1952) object relations theory and Winnicott's (1971) transitional object theory. Bowlby's (1982) attachment theory provides an explanatory framework for understanding social relationships in the context of a child's relationship with a parent. The central tenet in attachment theory is that of security of a child (Ainsworth & Bell, 1970). Recently, there has been an increasing trend of non-traditional application of the attachment theory in various multidisciplinary and clinical research literature, particularly in the fields of environmental psychology and psychology of religion. These studies promote knowledge of proximity-seeking behaviours with objects of attachment that are perceived as attachment surrogates with 'protective', 'sensitive', 'responsive' effects on an individual in times of danger and perceived environmental threats (e.g., Kirkpatrick & Shaver, 1990; Altman & Low, 1992; Ellison et al., 2014).

In justifying these new developments in attachment theory, Mikulincer et al. (2002) reasoned that the attachment behavioural system is not only activated in infancy but remains open to adaptation throughout a person's life. This adaptation process allows for the maturation of attachment developments in adults due to their increased cognitive abilities that enhance the biological function of the attachment system in which seeking and maintaining proximity with an attachment, protective, figure is prioritized (Granqvist and Kirkpatrick, 2016). Mental and reasoning abilities as well as problem solving continue to evolve during adolescence (Anderson et al. 2001). These maturation developments are supported by specific cognitive processes such as processing speed (e.g., Hale 1990), voluntary response suppression (e.g., Diamond & Goldman-Rakic, 1989), and working memory (e.g., Fischer et al. 1997), which are usually immature in childhood (Luna et al. 2004). Luna and colleagues (e.g., Luan et al. 2004; Luna & Sweeney, 2001) have linked these improvements in cognition to brain maturation and complex mental abilities, arguing that such increased cognitive abilities are interdependent processes that enhance mature levels of performance in adults. In investigating the cognitive milestones achieved that occur after early childhood, Luna and Sweeney (2001) reason that such

improvements “become significantly more sophisticated during adolescence” (p.445). This period of cognitive maturation is aimed at manipulating and managing emotionally attuned information within the environment through abstract thought, visual pattern, “planning and cognitive flexibility that takes place concurrently with significant reorganization of neural connectivity in the neocortex” (Luna & Sweeney, 2001, p.445). For example, cognitive processing tasks such as performance on visual pattern spatial recognition (e.g., Luciana & Nelson, 1998), in addition to performance on the Wisconsin Card Sorting Task (e.g., Levin, 1991), are often adult-like after early childhood.

Complex cognitive abilities show increased performance and sophistication by late childhood into adolescence as the individual engages in a more problem-solving exploration outside their broader environment through verbal fluency, visual satisfaction, motor sequencing, among other sophisticated tasks (e.g., Luna & Sweeney, 2001; Luna et al. 2004; Levin et al. 1991; Welsh et al. 1991). Granqvist and Kirkpatrick (2016) have argued that such maturation in cognitive ability can be seen in attachment developments after early childhood into adolescence, especially in the story of how an individual develops a relationship with God and is satisfied by the mere knowledge of their attachment to God.

Objects of Attachment

According to attachment theory, the interaction with primary caregivers in the early years of life form an internal working model, which is a set of expectations regarding self and others (Bowlby, 1982). The working model of attachment serves as a blueprint for inner cognitive representation of an object of attachment, enabling the individual to manage and make sense of the broader environment. Empirical evidence (e.g., Keefer et al. 2012) shows that objects of attachment can serve as compensation for a close other's perceived unreliability. Studies in adult attachment development (e.g., Cicirelli, 1991a, 1991a, 2004) show that the internal models of attachment, even though developed early in life, are carried forward into adolescence and adulthood to guide relationship expectations and attachment behaviour (Cassidy & Shaver, 2008; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007).

Attachment to God. The application of an internal working model in attachment theory has been used over the years to examine believer-God relationships within different religious traditions (e.g., Kirkpatrick, 1998; Granqvist et al. 2012; Bonab et al. 2013; Counted 2016b). Kirkpatrick (1992, 1998; Kirkpatrick & Shaver 1990) was one of the first set of researchers to propose that religious behaviours can be understood through attachment theory based on the expectation of the internal working model, even though the *object* of such interaction may be a nonphysical divine entity. According to Kirkpatrick (1992, 1998), ‘God’ (as a generic term that is not restricted to any religion) can serve as a safe haven and secure base for believers who are in distress, thus offering a critical source of hope and optimism in a dark *place*. Kaufman (1981) had earlier come to the same conclusion that God fits the criteria of an attachment-figure since he provides the most secure of secure bases as omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent (also see, Granqvist & Kirkpatrick, 2016).

Monotheistic religions (particularly Christianity) theologize the various ways of looking at divine relationships, in which God is often described as omnipresent (one who is always close and by one’s side), omniscient (infinitely wise and all-knowing), and omnipotent (having all power). For example, the Bible teaches that through prayer (i.e., Psalm 145:18), spiritual purification (i.e., James 4:8), and studying the Scriptures (i.e., Hebrews 4:12; Joshua 1:8) one can feel closer to God. Such feeling of proximity nurtures an aspect of attachment-caregiving in which connection to God offers a sense of security for the believer. This sense of safety fulfils “the evolutionary function of protecting otherwise defenceless infants from danger” (Granqvist & Kirkpatrick 2016, p.919). Bowlby (1982) had earlier reasoned that the potential danger can be [as] a result of frightening environmental events, injury, illness, and threat of separation from an attachment figure. When proximity to God addresses the need for protection and security and helps the believer to deal with an adverse life situation, whether through prayer, reading religious texts, meditation, spiritual purification, or clinging to a religious symbol, such felt need for care does bear a striking resemblance to Bowlby’s description of an attachment relationship. The Bible, for example, positions a “caregiving” characteristic of a relationship with God, conveying an image of God who is watching over his children. Johnson (1945, p.191) describes this as the emotional quality of faith, which is the

‘substance of things hoped for’ and a “basic confidence and security that gives one assurance. In this sense faith is the opposite of fear, anxiety, and uncertainty.”

The imaginary connection to God in most monotheistic religions is seen as the secure base upon which believers engage with the broader environment, eliciting typical religious coping behaviours such as prayer (Ellison et al. 2014; Bradshaw & Kent, 2017), religious forgiveness (Nolan et al. 2012; Currier et al. 2015), religious involvement (Idler et al. 2009), positive images of God (Bradshaw et al. 2010) and other religious rituals (e.g., Williams & Watts, 2014) that become helpful coping recourse for maintaining attachment with God. That a “person can be attached to a person who is not in turn attached to him or her” (Cassidy 1999, p.12) is compatible with the theological literature (e.g., Kaufman, 1981) that supports the idea of God as an attachment surrogate, one whom is a reliable source for hope and optimism.

If the long-enduring tie between two relational poles (or partners) is the criteria for an attachment relationship (e.g., Ainsworth 1989), then such a bond can also be developed with a divine entity, and in some cases even towards a particular place of significance, since they are likely to provide a similar affective advantage to that afforded during parental attachment. Therefore, while much of the attachment literature has been based on the early years of life, there is an increasing application of adult attachment theory to understanding various aspects of social relationship contexts that are related to religious behaviour (e.g., Granqvist & Kirkpatrick, 2016), workplace relationships (e.g., Leiter, Arla, Price, 2015), classroom experiences (e.g., Bergin & Bergin, 2009), leadership perceptions (e.g., Berson, Dan, Yammarino, 2006), and romantic relationships (Fraley et al. 2011). An additional form of attachment is to geographic places (Altman & Low, 1992), as will be discussed below.

Place Attachment. Another application of adult attachment theory is seen in environmental psychology and human geography, where place is defined as the locus of human experience and a setting that shapes human identity, serving as a setting ground for attachment cognitions, affects, and behaviours (Low & Altman, 1992; Scannell & Gifford, 2010). Since attachment forms during the early years of life, it is reasoned that the bonding that occurs between individuals and geographic places might be traced to the operation of the internal working model of the attachment behavioural system (Morgan, 2010). Chawla (1992) conceptualises this

as place attachment, linking it to childhood memories (Chawla, 1992). Florek (2011) described such attachment as an emotional bond established as a result of the effects of a mix of personal, community, and environmental connections. Place attachment theory is an integral part of people's lives (Relph, 1976) that emphasizes the positive and meaningful attributes of the inner representation which a person may have of a place where s/he lives or had a special experience that affords the felt need for security. While it is not proper to think of the variations in attachment processes as directly causing certain psychological outcomes, evidence (e.g., Sroufe and Waters, 1977; Cicirelli, 2004; Sroufe, 2005) suggests that the goal of adult attachment is the need for felt security which is achieved in older children and adults due to their increased cognitive abilities through imagined and visual connection with an object of attachment, in which, I argue, that place is an example.

Environmental psychologists (e.g., Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; Scannell & Gifford, 2010; Seamon, 2012, 2014) have proposed different dimensions of place to which people can be drawn. In serving as a definition, place attachment is a multidimensional concept that involves three dimensions: (i) the physical and natural elements of a geographic setting (Moor & Graefe, 1994); (ii) the resources, opportunities, and activities in a place to which people are drawn (Stokols & Shumaker, 1981); and (iii) the identity of a place that makes it distinct from other places (Proshansky et al. 1983). The first dimension is characterised as the material and environmental qualities of place, including human-made elements and spatial configurations such as buildings, street furniture, graffiti, and pathway layouts. The second dimension of place to/in which attachment occurs is in the lifeworlds and natural attitudes of a place, such as immediate experiences, activities, contacts, actions, routines, events, and understandings that make up the world of an individual in which they involve themselves on a behavioural basis. The third dimension of place attachment has a cognitive function and may refer to the unique atmosphere, character, or language of a place, influencing people to forge place identity (Scannell & Gifford, 2010; Counted, 2016c).

Along with the growing literature on place attachment, several empirical studies have demonstrated some overlaps between place attachment and basic principles of interpersonal attachment based on Ainsworth's (1978) criteria for assessing attachment relationships: proximity maintenance, safe haven, secure base,

and separation anxiety. In comparing the tenets of place attachment with interpersonal attachment, Scannell and Gifford (2014) have highlighted several areas in which both theories overlap in terms of functioning and attachment mechanisms. First, both place attachment and interpersonal attachment involve maintaining physical proximity to an important person or place, serving as a haven of safety and a secure base (e.g., Brown et al. 2003; Lewicka, 2010). Infants maintain proximity to their caregiver in interpersonal attachment through clinging and turning toward them (Bowlby, 1982; Ainsworth, 1978), while proximity is formed in place attachment contexts through purchasing a home in a particular suburb, displaying photo images of a symbolic object or photo taken in a specific place (Ryan & Ogilvie, 2001), visualizing an image of a place (Scannell & Gifford, 2017), visiting a particular place for vacation every year (e.g., Kelly & Hosking, 2008), or, refusing to leave a particular place even when it is under threat or affected by disaster (Billig et al. 2006; Donovan et al., 2012; Fried, 2000).

In addition, while interpersonal attachment may serve as a safe haven and secure base for the attached individual (Bowlby, 1982, Ainsworth, 1979), places of attachment may also appear to invoke the same advantage. Brown et al. (2003), as well as Lewicka (2010), have studied how a residential home can be perceived as a haven of safety even in the face of danger. A study conducted among Israelis in the Gaza region (e.g., Billig, 2006) suggests that places can still be deemed worthy of attachment and less dangerous in war-like events among those specially drawn to them. Studies (e.g., Feeney & Thrush, 2010; Gustafson, 2001) also show that emotional bonds in interpersonal and place attachment contexts both serve as a secure base supporting individual exploration of the broader environment. Fried (2000) saw such outcome in a community's reaction to grieving their lost homes in the West End of Boston, as they dealt with their dislocation by relying upon their meaningful sense of community while exploring the possibility of moving to other places. Just as in interpersonal attachment, separation distress may also occur in the event of losing important people in an important place (e.g., Cox & Perry, 2011). These conceptual overlaps also demonstrate how place attachment may differ in pattern from interpersonal attachment, as well as with the attachment-religion thesis.

Given the above propositions, I come to the premise of my argument that a place can fulfil the attachment relationship role, in addition to, or instead of, God. The application of attachment theory to exploring the idea of place and God as potential objects of attachment provides some knowledge about (a) how spirituality is a social reality in a place to which people are drawn and (b) attachment-related place spirituality which will be defined as the interplay of place attachment and God attachment, informing on how place experiences foster devotion to and experience of God. To reinforce the proposed argument, the author provides further theoretical bases for understanding attachment-related place spirituality, using Lichtenberg's motivational systems theory.

Introducing a Place Spirituality Hypothesis

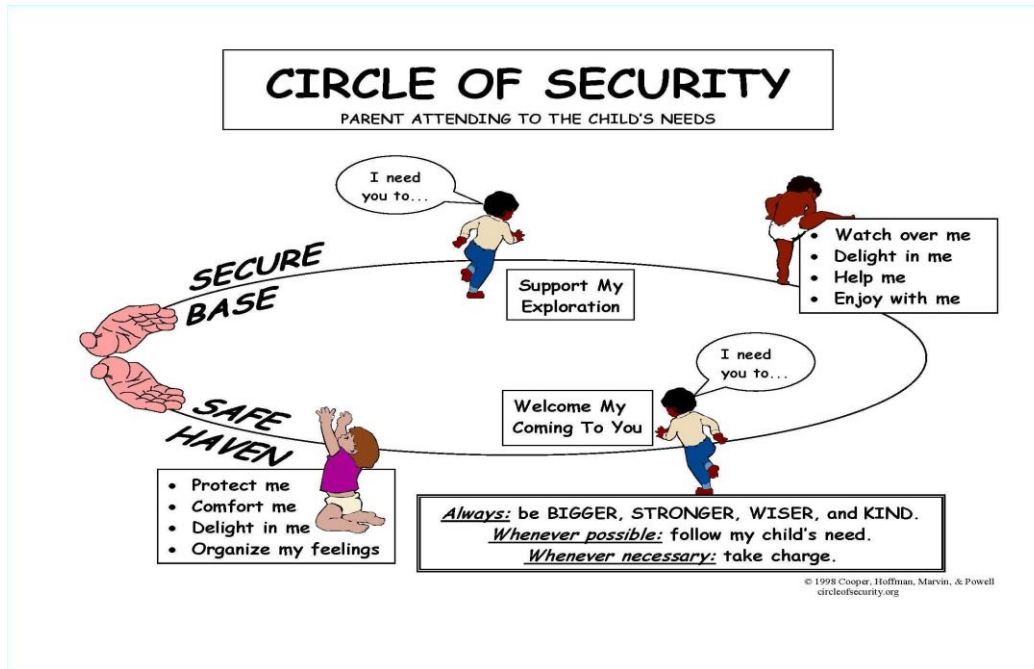
Some general insights are drawn from the discussion in the previous sections. First there is a strong probability that a religious believer will develop behaviours that draw them closer to God in their journey of spirituality, and in particular relate to a mix of attractions and activities in a place that may satisfy the need for attachment and meaning-making. Second, the attachment to place or to God is linked to the internal working model of attachment which facilitates the bond with the object of attachment depending on the situation. Third, the enhancement of cognitive abilities in adults (e.g., Luna et al. 2004; Luna & Sweeney, 2001) provides the ground for the inner representations and sense of felt security which a person may have of non-corporeal objects such as a special place or a divine entity, although physical contact with such a figure is not possible.

Though infant and adult attachment developments are achieved differently, both are the outcomes of the internal working models formed in the early years of life and consist of series of reflexive behaviours that are aimed at monitoring the emotional communication with the attachment figure while assuring a safe haven and secure base. This is very much nuanced in the Strange Situation model developed by Mary Ainsworth and colleagues (1978) who sought to investigate an infant's exploration of an unfamiliar environment and its attractions (room and its toys), and the nature of the emotionally attuned communication with the attachment figure (caretaker), especially when the infant senses a separation from the caretaker. Ainsworth et al. (1978) found two brief accounts of separation in their model. First is

the secure attachment style, suggesting how the infant feels (i.e., confident) about the responsive and comforting nature of the caretaker as a secure base from whom to explore the environment when distressed. Second is the insecure attachment style, which refers to the infant's lack of confidence in the sensitivity and availability of the caretaker as a secure base in times of distress; in this case the response of the infant is to shift attention towards exploring the broader environment at the expense of relying on their caretaker, and thus "minimize their attention to attachment-related information that might otherwise lead them to approach the caregiver, as this retains the availability of the caregiver" (Granqvist et al. 2017: 5).

As for adults, there is a likelihood of attachment maturation as the need for meaning-making and identity construction overshadows the need for proximity and protection from an attachment figure. Unlike infants, who minimize attention towards the caregiver as a secure base when alarmed or distressed (Ainsworth et al. 1979), adults are likely to turn to an object of attachment during situations of insecurity to strengthen their sense of felt security. It is on this ground that it is argued that the interplay between exploration of place and attachment to God can be an important aspect to consider in the development of an attachment-related place spirituality connection in the psychology of religion. This connection is referred to in this paper as 'the circle of place spirituality' (CoPS) by applying Marvin et al.'s (2002) Circle of Security (CoS) model which is a framework of infant behaviour in relation to the primary caregiver, resulting from the interaction of the exploration and attachment motivation systems. As seen in figure 1, CoS describes an infant's circular movement within an environment that begins and ends with the primary caregiver. When the exploration motivation system is activated, the infant moves away from the primary caregiver (who is their secure base) to explore their broader physical environment. In a case where the infant is distressed or anxious, the attachment motivation system is activated as they seek attachment and emotional regulation from the primary caregiver (who is perceived as their safe haven). CoS underlies how the infant's emotional states and needs are shaped as a circular trajectory in terms of their interaction with the primary caregiver (Marvin et al. 2002).

Figure 1: Circle of Security (© Cooper, Hoffman, Marvin, & Powell, 1999)



Drawing on the theoretical insights from the CoS model, the proposed CoPS is a model of adult religious behaviour in relation to the attachment bond resulting from the interplay of the exploration and attachment motivation system in which exploration of place and attachment to God become a reality. CoPS is a system of self-organisation facilitating positive subjective needs and personal growth opportunities through the attachment and exploration drives respectively. CoPS model is drawn in Figure 2 where the individual(s) within this 'circle' runs to and fro between two attachment poles, stimulating attachment to a divine entity and exploration of place. Both place and the divine entity can be seen as safe havens and secure bases for attachment exploration. It is thus argued that this circular pattern of movement within CoPS represents the interaction of two motivational systems: exploratory-assertion and attachment-affiliation. The notion of a bidirectional relationship between exploration of place and attachment to God (or/and with other objects of attachment) was drawn from the idea that human behaviours are patterned in a circular movement aimed at achieving the need for security and meaning and the drive for attaining certain physiological needs within the environment (Marvin et al., 2002). The CoPS model is also in line with Morgan's (2010) proposal of an interplay of exploration of place and interpersonal attachment.

The theoretical bases of CoS (Marvin et al 2002) have been adopted in parallel with Lichtenberg's (1988, 1989) motivational systems theory in order to articulate a developmental theory for CoPS. Most of Lichtenberg's works have advanced the study of psychoanalysis and drive theory, showing how the interplay of multiple shifting motivations within the individual are shaped by their intersubjective contexts. There are reasons to believe therefore that Lichtenberg's (1988) motivational systems theory may strengthen the understanding of CoPS, even though it is acknowledged that attachment theory also recognizes the interaction between the attachment system and exploratory system (as it is with Lichtenberg's attachment-affiliation and exploration-assertion systems). To justify the use of Lichtenberg's theory to interpret the interplay between exploration of place and attachment to God, the following reasons are presented.

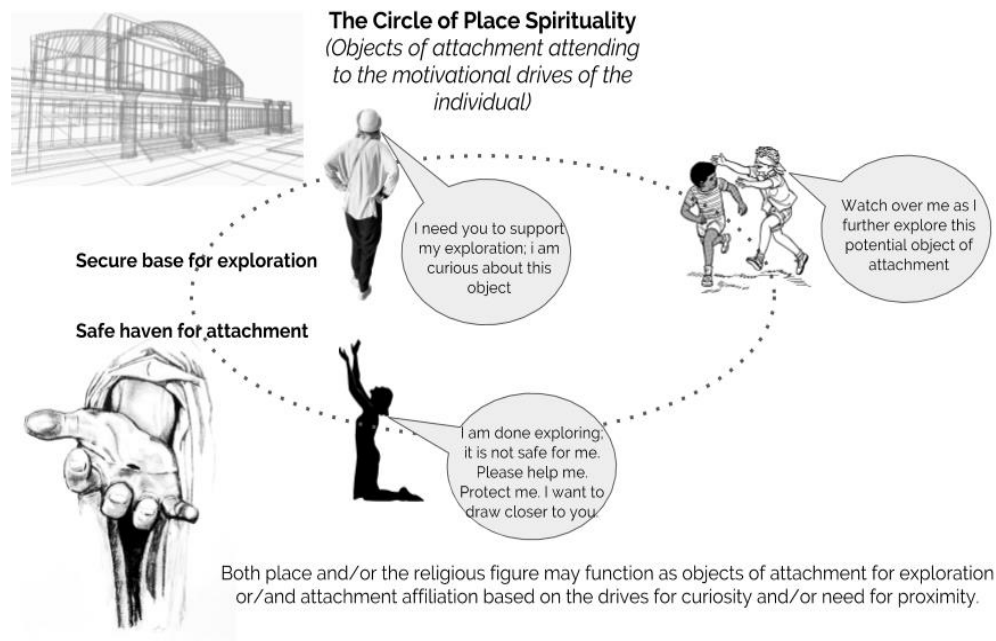
First, Lichtenberg's model (1988, 1989) draws on relational theory and replaces the Freudian drive-conflict model with a multiple motivation model that is centered on affective processes, which Fonagy (2003) conceptualised as an 'interpersonal mechanism' that exists as a result of the attachment behavioural system developed during the early years of life. Although these affective processes take different forms, they mostly involve the inner representation of some 'object' of attachment and the ability to mentalize the emotionally attuned communication with such object on the basis of the individual's emotions, intentions, desires, and beliefs (Jimenez, 2006). According to Jimenez, when the individual experiences a sense of earned security with an object of attachment, the genes responsible for the mentalizing process (often located in the temporoparietal sulcus and the medial prefrontal cortex) come into play (e.g., Zimmer, 2003; Gallagher et al. 2000). For example, studies by Krause (1990) and Ekman (1992) show that affective processes such as rage, fear, sadness, happiness, surprise, annoyance, contempt, are basic affects with a phylogenetic base that often propels the individual to explore the broader environment or express a desire in relation to an object based on their situational configuration. In other words, Lichtenberg's model demonstrates how sensation and affects are seen as desires that the subject can express toward an object of attachment (Jimenez, 2006).

Second, as a Lichtenberg-inspired hypothesis, CoPS is a model of structured motivation in that the attachment-affiliation or exploration-assertion system is organised and stabilized in a hermeneutic, reciprocal tension that undergoes a

constant adjustment and a state of flux that is contingent on developmental and environmental circumstances. In other words, each of CoPS system may be dominant in a specific moment of experience while the other less active in its latent state. While Lichtenberg's (1988, 1998) motivational systems, just as in Bowlby's attachment working models (1982), are developed through interactions with primary caregivers during the early years of life, the adaptive goals of motivational systems are tied to their structural developments. This means that the motivational dominance, or interaction between place and religion, is dependent on the intersubjective context (e.g., personal feelings, tastes, intentions, drives, or opinions) of the moment (Lichtenberg, 1998; Jimenez, 2006). Stern (2004) refers to this as a radical human relationality that positions intersubjective desires as significant innate motivational systems that are essential for individual survival. The desire for intersubjectivity could therefore be one of the primary motivations that drives the interplay between exploration of place and attachment to God, and another reason for adopting Lichtenberg's theory. And most importantly, Lichtenberg's approach attempts to integrate both attachment and psychoanalysis, as it also accounts for the self-referential aspects of one's social, cultural, and political contexts that constitute intersubjective relations.

In this context, it is proposed that motivation plays a key role in the interplay of exploration of place and attachment to God. Motivation is both "a quality inherent to the child, which determines how the child will use the environment, and a quality of the environment, which has the potential to draw the child's involvement" (Striniste & Moore 1989, p.25). When the exploration motivation system is activated, the religious believer moves away from their relationship with God to explore activities and attractions in a place. On the other hand, when the religious believer becomes anxious and distressed about their experiences in a place, the attachment system is activated, and they seek proximity to, and emotional healing, from God.

Figure 2: The Circle of Place Spirituality (CoPS)



Clarifying CoPS Systems: The exploration-assertion and attachment-affiliation drives

While attachment theory provides some preliminary insights into attachment-related place spirituality, it is argued that the presentation of the circle of place spirituality (CoPS) requires a careful examination of Lichtenberg's motivational systems because it is more nuanced for examining place spirituality. The “bad blood” between attachment and psychoanalysis is well recognized among researchers (Fonagy & Campbell, 2015), as the CoPS theoretical proposition draws on attachment thinking while pointing to the psychoanalytic project in its formulations. CoPS suggests some points of convergence and contention that bear on mentalizing theory to describe an argument about the interplay of developments in the exploration of place and attachment to God. Lichtenberg (1988, 1989) has succeeded in drawing from both schools of thought (i.e., attachment and psychoanalysis) to present a motivational systems theory for interpreting human development behaviour which he describes as a theory of structured motivation based on his interpretation of psychoanalysis. Lichtenberg proposes five motivational systems for his theory, with the task of defining motivational systems that “exist in early infancy, persist in altered forms

throughout life, and characterize observable changes in motivational dominance in an analytic session" (Lichtenberg, 1988, p. 60). Lichtenberg writes from a psychoanalytic perspective, arguing that his motivation systems are built around fundamental needs:

the need to fulfil physiological requirements, the need for attachment and affiliation, the need for assertion and exploration, the need to react aversively through antagonism and/or withdrawal, [and] the need for sensual and sexual pleasure. [Each of the motivation systems] is based on behaviour observable in the neonatal period; each may be the dominant motive expressed by an [individual's] wishes.... For each motivational-functional system, affects are central (1988, p.60).

Lichtenberg and colleagues (2011) have further developed the motivational systems theory in their book *Psychoanalysis and Motivational Systems*, providing conceptual frames for understanding the unfolding of affects, intentions, and mental states within a relationship. Lichtenberg's work not only helps us to see how the proposed motivational drives are interdigitated but also how to identify the distinctiveness between a variety of motivational experiences. Two of Lichtenberg's motivational systems (attachment-affiliation and exploration-assertion) are integrated in the CoPS model since the need for assertion and exploration, and the need for attachment and affiliation, are more broadly nuanced for clarifying CoPS.

Lichtenberg used the term 'motivational systems' to convey that "we are not dealing with structures or functions but with continuously ongoing processes" (1989, p.6) that stress change and plasticity; the idea of organizing, integrating, and initiating into different patterns of psychological activities. This self-organisation between feelings of insecurity and security with objects of attachment is intended to reawaken the need for meaningful caregiving relationships. For instance, perceived feelings of anxiety and insecurity with a divine entity may be linked to exploring activities in a place, aimed at improving one's sense of security in dealing with an insecure attachment. Alternatively, the individual is likely to securely explore a new relationship with God and at the same time be drawn to a place. The connection between the two is that both objects of attachment are reliable sources for support in terms of their changing roles as secure bases and safe havens.

The two proposed motivational systems for exploring CoPS give a more comprehensive insight into the dynamics of place spiritual functioning, reflecting different patterns of processing emotional information with objects of attachment. The shifting motivational drives in CoPS are identified in this paper as the ‘exploratory-assertion’ and ‘attachment-affiliation’ drives. Understanding the dynamics of CoPS would require the recognition of the role of intention, emotion, and motivation as central agencies of human behaviour throughout life, both in regard to the implicit and explicit areas of psychic organisation. Furthermore, one’s lived experience has its own unique characteristics, and as a result, CoPS becomes an individual’s personal experience. One motivational drive operates differently from the other and is adapted based on the unique experience of the individual. The evolution of capacities in each person emerges with new motivations, and functions as a complex array of inputs and circumstances that are actively encountered. These encounters differ greatly, leaving room for a range of variability from one person to another.

Table 1 provides an outline of the possible differences between the exploration and attachment drives. While the attachment drive may operate the same way in relationships with objects of attachment, the exploration drive may differ in operation in terms of the kind of experiential dynamics with a particular object of attachment. One way to recognise how the exploration drive differs from the attachment drive is in terms of how the exploratory search with a potential attachment figure is carried out. Unlike the attachment drive which is undertaken with an attachment figure that is perceived and trusted as a safe haven and secure base, the exploratory drive involves exploration by someone who is probably unfamiliar with, and unsure about, the *domain* of their goal. This uncertainty results in them wanting to learn more about their potential relationship, partly out of curiosity, in order to see whether what they will gain from such a relationship with the object of attachment will help them achieve their goal. Outlined in Table 1 is how the exploration and attachment systems may differ in some aspects from each other.

Table 1: The difference between the exploration and attachment CoPS drives

<i>The exploration-assertive system in CoPS</i>	<i>The attachment-affiliation system in CoPS</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A motivational drive from a secure base that stimulates relationship exploration with a potential object of attachment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A motivational drive that stimulates proximity to an object of attachment that is perceived as a safe haven.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activated due to attention to feelings on how to meet a goal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driven by physiological adjustments, biological foundations, and affiliative needs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploration drive activates due to reflective awareness, intentions, and curiosity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attachment drive is based on emotional and cognitive appraisals of the object of attachment in terms of individual needs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involves exploratory search by ‘searchers’ who are unfamiliar with the advantage of having a relationship with a potential object of attachment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involves attachment affiliation by ‘seekers’ who are familiar with the prototype of their attachment caregiver.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The immediate function is to learn and explore a potential object of attachment that stimulates the deployment of attentional resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The immediate function is to develop proximity to an object of attachment that is perceived as a safe haven and a secure base.

The origins of the two proposed motivational drives are needs and curiosity: the need to develop proximity to a safe haven and the curiosity to explore a relationship with a potential object of attachment from a secure base. This does not, however, mean that equating motivational drives with subjective needs has the same clinical utility as the two categorical interactions that are offered. This is because if

each expression of need or desire is a motivational system, it is then clinically difficult to recognize continuity in the recurrence of motivational states that are central to specific self-organizations since such recurrence arise from a fundamental psychological process that facilitates the flow of motivated human behaviour into intentional organizations (Lichtenberg, 2016). Therefore, while CoPS is presented as the interplay of two shifting motivational systems and fundamental *need*, it is also acknowledged that these interactions can vary based on individual differences and intentions.

This variation in CoPS is discussed in two parts. First, as an attachment affiliation drive to a safe haven in times of danger, and second, as an exploratory search carried out from the secure base to evaluate and learn about an unfamiliar object of attachment. This dichotomy will be explained in the following pages.

The attachment-affiliation drive

Bowlby (1982) and Ainsworth (1985) hypothesized a history of negative emotions which predispose people to search for attachment surrogates. They reasoned that infants who are unable to find secure attachment with their primary caregivers are likely seek such closure in their siblings, teachers, or to any close other who is seen as readily accessible and responsive. The attachment system is activated when an infant perceives a danger within the environment, enabling them to seek proximity to the attachment caregiver. This treatment of attachment theory is applicable when seeking to understand how the attachment drive operates in motivational systems theory. It is reasoned that in order to adapt to the challenges and setbacks encountered within a particular environment, it is possible to undertake some sort of physiological adjustment to cope with such challenges. This can happen through seeking proximity to an object of attachment, one perceived as being a safe haven in times of danger. Such an object may also function as a secure base for exploring the world of danger. Infants develop such attachments with their primary caregivers. For adults, such real or imagined attachment can happen with abstract and anthropomorphised objects that are seen as meeting the criteria of an attachment figure. Such objects of attachment can take the form of a divine entity or a geographic place in adult attachment developments, as argued in this paper.

CoPS attachment-affiliation model describes the activation and/or deactivation of a motivational drive that often appears in the foreground of an attachment experience, and then recedes into the background when the object of attachment is not upholding its promise of security and protection (Cortina and Liotti, 2010). It is possible for an individual who is not satisfied in a relationship to seek attachment a surrogate. Attachment to one object could account for the insecurity experienced with another object of attachment. A similar thread can be seen when negative place experiences account for insecurity with God or when one is securely attached to God but withdraws from a place because of the negative experiences encountered in such a setting. In such a motivational drive, the individual engages a safe haven in the form of an object of attachment, seeking proximity, security, and protection. In other words, the relationship with a responsive object of attachment forms the basis for developing a secure base for exploring the world, self, and other objects. The attachment drive displayed here is the result of the internal working model in the attachment system that influences human actions. The attachment working model is a unique way of representing and seeing the world around us.

The attachment-affiliation system is activated as a way of responding to the challenges experienced with an object of attachment, be it a place and/or a divine entity. This activation/deactivation, according to Lichtenberg et al., is “based on emotional and cognitive appraisals” which they later referred to as “inferences” (2011, p.18). Inferences and cognitive appraisals of an object of attachment often go through different phases of emotional processing which determine the extent of such a relationship. This process can either remain automatic or nonconscious, or with further processing, can also become conscious as it aligns with one’s psych (Cortina & Liotti 2007).

The difference between distinct motivational systems lies in the language source or implicit interactions used in its designations. For instance, a CoPS attachment drive may identify with affiliative needs, which Lichtenberg (1988), in citing Pinderhughes (1985, p.65), describes as a “powerful motivation to generalize relations in such groups as family, neighbourhood, school, team, religion, country, toward whom we establish highly organized affiliations”. The attachment system in

CoPS is concerned with one's affiliative needs and serves as a powerful motivation for exploring a new relationship with an attachment surrogate.

However, not all affiliations are *exciting*, some may be conflictual. For example, members of a dispersed population may be torn between returning to their home country and staying in their adopted foreign country. On returning to their home country, they are likely to be confronted with the problems in that place - whether economic, political, or religious - for an unprecedented period of time. If they decide to remain in a foreign country, they will probably also have to deal with certain emotionally depleting socio-cultural inequities that are often part of their everyday experience in the foreign land.

The attachment drive is a model for expressing intentions to maintain close proximity with an object of attachment. Along with seeking a secure base and a safe haven, this motivational system also includes experiences of the internal working model which are often mirrored in the object of attachment, thus intriguing a sense of proximity and commonality for the qualities of the object (e.g., being a protective, caregiving figure). The attachment drive is peculiar in nature because the object to which proximity is targeted is not perceived as alien to the individual experiencing the phenomenology, but is within the individual in such a way that the 'otherness' of the attachment surrogate can be investigated beginning with the way that otherness is imminent in the individual's ego (i.e. the consciousness of their own identity) and present to the individual 'in person'. Since activation/deactivation of the attachment system derives from one's personal experience and biological set-up, it is thus argued that a range of negative place experiences (e.g. feelings of marginalisation, racism, protests, and violence) and insecure God experiences (e.g. feelings of being abandoned by God, anger with God, being anxious about a relationship with God) may facilitate the attachment drive in CoPS. The CoPS attachment-affiliation system varies in its patterns, organisations, and representations, depending on the kind of object of attachment involved.

The exploratory-assertion drive

The exploration drive is the desire to gratify the mind with new information about an object of attachment and promotes survival through such curiosity (Berlyne, 1960, 1971). The study of curiosity in psychology is concerned with the way people guide their attention and explore in the presence of a new phenomenon. Curiosity

refers to receptivity and the willingness to engage with a new stimulus. Bishop et al. (2004) reason that curiosity is an important motivational component in the exploration drive that involves being interested in new things and having a receptive attitude towards a target of attention. A potential object of attachment can be the target of such attention. When people feel curious about a potential object of attachment, they are more likely to devote attention to an activity or process information that can activate their exploration drive to meet their set goals in terms of achieving breakthroughs with the object (Silvia, 2006).

The human brain is fundamentally curious in nature. Curiosity functions as a learning process in terms of exploring and immersing one's self in an activity that draws one closer to whatever the target of attention might be (Loewenstein, 1994). Phenomenological breakthroughs begin with curiosity in terms of helping the individual learn about how to adapt to a new environment. Kasdan et al. (2004) describe such curiosity as an important component in motivational theory in that it facilitates personal growth opportunities, on the basis that it draws people to engage in activities that have the properties of novelty, complexity, uncertainty, and conflict. The facts about curiosity in the exploration system were once hard to reconcile in Freud's (1915) psychoanalysis and later developed by behavioral scientists (e.g., Miller & Dollard, 1941; Berlyne, 1960, 1971) who reason that human behaviour is often times directed toward "minimizing stimulation and excitation; a view that anybody who has had to handle a child 'with nothing to do' must have been tempted to question" (Berlyne, 1967, p.26).

In addition to the need for attachment, CoPS can also be understood in terms of the breakthroughs that begin with curiosity in a variety of situations, which in turn lead to believer-God or people-place attachment developments. The CoPS exploration system works in tandem with curiosity, in that it fosters proximity with a potential object of attachment and facilitates personal growth opportunities that may involve developing spirituality or processing place information. Loewenstein (1994) argued that this state of learning something new in terms of curiosity might reduce the uncertainty and anxiety associated with the exploration drive. Although White (1959) contested such anxiety reduction theory, other recent sources (e.g., Depue, 1996; Watson et al. 1999) found evidence to support such a theory. Curiosity makes people engage with a potential object of attachment for personally meaningful

interests and desires and thereby is implicitly motivating (Deci, 1975). Here 'implicit' means that one makes sense of the object of attachment being encountered during the process of exploration (Silvia, 2008). This exploration confidence might vary depending on the contexts of engagement and objects involved.

The CoPS exploration drive is likely to be expressed as the willingness to learn about a novel, uncertain, or unpredictable object of attachment as part of everyday life. This process of exploration requires that one embraces the unpredictability of a potential object of attachment, instead of avoiding such engagement. This sense of curiosity is required in building relationships and knowledge about an object; one with the potential of meeting the basic needs of security, attachment, and autonomy. In this context, it is argued the CoPS exploration system is directed towards curiosity, with the potential of building a relationship with 'God' or a 'place', even though such exploration may vary significantly in patterns and dynamics and differ from the attachment drive.

Attachment Needs and Exploration Curiosity: The Motivational Drives in CoPS

It is reasonable to expect that the two proposed motivational drives (i.e., attachment needs and exploration curiosity) develop in response to *need*. While *need* might be the primary drive for the attachment-affiliation motivation, as offered in classical psychoanalytic theory (e.g., Ghent, 2008; Lichtenberg, 1989; Edelman, 1987), the exploration-assertive motivation does not rely solely on *need*. Exploration is rather done on the basis of curiosity and one's intentions. The distinction between the attachment and exploration drives enables us to think afresh about motivational systems in terms of how the concept of motivation transcends thinking of needs to include intentions, curiosity, and other drive derivatives (Ghent, 2008).

If *need* is all that controls our self- organization and regulation within the environment, then it raises the question of human *curiosity* and other explicit derivatives that might constitute such movement. Edelman (1987) reasoned that self-organization comes about when there are pre-programmed psychic developments in which need or curiosity serve as the product of a range of other intrinsic values such as feelings, preferences, intentions, prejudices, and biases. A good example of this is

when someone explores a new place spontaneously for vacation. The reason for this exploration is most likely because they are curious about the new place and not because there are any issues in their relationship with God. In contrast, someone else may go in pursuit of happiness by turning to religion after a natural disaster as they search for a safe haven in God for comfort, hope, and attachment. In the first example, the individual explores a place even though they are secure in their attachment to God, whereas in the second case, the individual affiliates with God due to the loss of attachment with place. In both cases, the curiosity to search and the need for attachment have been triggered by intrinsic values that have influenced the activation of CoPS systems.

While attachment breakthroughs begin with curiosity, the distinction between the two accounts above are the driving factors at play. One is driven by an exploration curiosity whereas the latter is based on the need for attachment. Both driving factors are based upon the individual's experience, context, prejudice, intention, preference, or bias about the object of attachment in attention. Damasio's (1999) study provides a background for this argument, as he saw an infant's action selection in terms of needs and curiosity as the outcome of their motivational drives. Subsequent repetition of a particular motivational drive would result in an associative cognitive affect about the object, which then becomes a norm. Hence, when a place is constantly visited and perceived as a safe haven and secure base, such perception becomes the norm for the individual after a period of time, thus leading to a possible development of attachment with such object. In other words, affect can be an explicit phenomenon when activating either the exploration-assertive or attachment-affiliation system in CoPS. This perspective is grounded in an evolutionary perspective that begins with an inducer triggering a feeling (Lichtenberg et al. 2011). The perception of a stimulus based on the nature of the coordinating driving forces are factors that induce the activation of the attachment or exploration drive to a particular object of attachment.

In summary, exploratory drive operates as a CoPS system that occurs because one's curiosity upon engagement with an object of attachment, while the attachment drive is activated due to individual needs. These engagements can take place based on several nonverbal, verbal, or subsymbolic processes, but are often linked to a

referential process that facilitates the development of an ever-needed relationship with an attachment surrogate, which can happen anywhere and at any time.

Concluding Remarks

The paper extends the discourse on attachment-religion and place attachment connections, embracing a more integrative approach that takes into account the dual shifting of motivational drives (i.e. exploration-assertive and attachment-affiliation systems) within the circle of place spirituality (CoPS). It emphasizes the need to guide our understanding of place spirituality by supplementing ideas from motivational systems theory to illustrate the interplay of exploration of place and attachment to God, stressing that motivation plays a key role in activating/deactivating CoPS. The CoPS model initiates and sustains psychological activities resulting from the exploration and attachment motivational systems in which an object of attachment is the target of proximity and attention. The need for attachment and exploration curiosity were discussed as the two primary driving forces in CoPS in terms of the shifting kaleidoscope of intentionalities, feelings, preferences, desires, and aims that are the result of exploring relationships or developing attachment with potential attachment surrogates.

The application of attachment theory and motivational systems theory has allowed for a better understanding of CoPS, while further promoting the convergence of attachment and psychoanalysis. In recognising the conceptual limits of CoPS, it is hoped that the proposed model becomes an additional framework for examining religious behaviour in the study of psychology of religion. However, CoPS still requires further development and empirical validation¹ in order to contribute to the debate on migration, spirituality, and psychology.

While it is also possible to assume that the idea of religion in the context of CoPS follows Freud's psychoanalysis of pleasure-seeking instinctual drives, the author argues against such a presupposition since the focus of CoPS is not in the genesis of the attachment or exploration experience itself, but it is about what the

¹ Two waves of empirical studies in the Netherlands and Australia are currently being completed on the CoPS model. Although the reports are still being prepared and have been presented at the 2017 IAPR Conference in Norway, the preliminary findings show that the relationship between exploration of place and attachment to God may be context-driven in relation to several migration and socio-demographic factors, and more salient in settings that expose individuals to a range of socio-cultural inequities. The preliminary findings also show that such interplay has significant health implications for the individual.

experience does for the individual believer in need of caregiving in their exploration curiosity. Nonetheless, what has been presented in this paper requires further investigation, even though it may have offered some insightful blueprints to understand how religious behaviour within the context of place may have come about as a result of the interplay within CoPS systems.

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part 2

Empirical Applications